



# **Senior & Ambassador Troop Support Guide**

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# Welcome

Welcome and congratulations on becoming a member of the unique and wonderful world of Girl Scouts! Girl Scouts is the world's preeminent organization dedicated solely to girls – all girls – where, in an accepting and nurturing environment girls build character and skills for success in the real world. In partnership with committed adults, such as you, girls develop qualities that will serve them all their lives. These qualities include leadership, strong values, social conscience, and conviction about their own worth.

The Girl Scout program is girl-driven reflecting the ever-changing needs and interests of today's girls. In Girl Scouts, girls discover the fun, friendship, and the power of girls together. As a Girl Scout volunteer, you will help girls develop their full potential; relate to others with increasing understanding, skill, and respect; develop values to guide their actions and provide the foundation for sound decision-making; and contribute to the improvement of society through their abilities, leadership skills, and cooperation with others.

## Your Role as a Troop Leader

For Girl Scout Seniors and Ambassadors, your role as leader is that of Advisor. You will do less of the planning as the girls will begin to do more with your guidance. Working with girls can bring many joys, including developing a personal relationship with each girl in your troop, building new adult friendships through the sisterhood of Girl Scouts, receiving appreciation and thanks from parents and, most importantly, knowing that you are shaping the future by working with a girl today.

### Leadership

#### *Leadership is Building Relationships*

Leadership comes through the relationship you will build with each girl. Leadership comes through communicating with parents and co-leaders. Leadership is understanding the needs and interests of the girls, and helping the girls design their own program opportunities based on those needs and interests.

#### *Leadership is Knowing*

Leadership is knowing that you cannot, and should not, know everything that the girls might want to learn. Leadership is knowing that you can explore and learn many things along with girls. Leadership is knowing where to go to find resources. Leadership is knowing that it is okay not to know and to seek assistance.

#### *Leadership is Teaching*

Leadership is teaching the girls that they can do and be anything – that they are decision makers. Leadership is teaching girls not only for the sake of knowing things, but for the

sake of the development and growth of the girls. Leadership is teaching through being a good role model.

### ***Leadership is Coaching***

Your role is not to perform for the girls, or to be a teacher. Leadership is guiding and instructing. Leadership is advising and discussing. Leadership is working so that each girl can carry out responsibilities within the troop. Leadership is building the girls up and giving more and more responsibilities to the girls as they grow and develop.

### ***Leadership is Belonging***

Leadership is recognizing that you are a part of a troop/group and a team. Leadership is listening, providing suggestions, and contributing ideas. Leadership is sticking with the girls through good times and bad. Leadership is recognizing that you belong to a larger organization beyond the troop/group that will provide support and resources.

## **Volunteer Responsibilities**

Additional responsibilities as a Girl Scout volunteer include:

- Accepting the Girl Scout Promise and Law
- Understanding the Three Keys to Leadership that are the basis of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience: Discover, Connect, and Take Action
- Sharing your knowledge, experience, and skills with a positive and flexible approach
- Working in a partnership with girls so that their activities are girl-led, allow them to learn by doing, and allow for cooperative (group) learning; you'll also partner with other volunteers and council staff for support and guidance
- Organizing fun, interactive, girl-led activities that address relevant issues and match girls' interests and needs
- Providing guidance and information regarding Girl Scout group meetings with girls' parents or guardians on a regular and ongoing basis through a variety of tools, including email, phone calls, newsletters, blogs, other forms of social media, and any other method you choose
- Processing and completing registration forms and other paperwork, such as permission slips
- Communicating effectively and delivering clear, organized, and vibrant presentations or information to an individual or the group
- Overseeing with honesty, integrity, and careful record-keeping the funds that girls raise
- Maintaining a close connection to your volunteer support team
- Facilitating a safe experience for every girl

# Working with Seniors & Ambassadors

## The Girl Scout Leadership Experience

The Girl Scout Leadership Experience is what makes Girl Scouts unique compared to any other youth serving organization. There are three program processes. These program processes are the key to achieving the outcomes and the Girl Scout Promise and Law. The three program processes are:

- Girl-Led – By the Girls, For the Girls
- Learning by Doing – Experiential Learning
- Cooperative Learning

### Girl-Led

“Girl – Led” is just what it sounds like – girls play an active part in figuring out the what, where, when, how and why of their activities. So coach the girls to lead the planning, decision-making, learning, and to have as much fun as possible. This ensures that girls are engaged in their learning and experience leadership opportunities as they prepare to become active participants in their local and global communities.

Engage the girls in scheduling how often, when and where the team meets. Encourage them to add on trips and other activities that spark their imaginations. Have them identify topics that matter to them. Have them drive most of the planning, organizing and implementation of their projects with your guidance.

### Learning by Doing

Learning by Doing is a hands-on learning process that engages girls in continuous cycles of action and reflection that result in deeper understanding of concepts and mastery of practical skills. As they participate in meaningful activities and then reflect on them, girls get to explore their own questions, discover answers, gain new skills, and share ideas and observations with others. Throughout the process, it is important for girls to be able to connect their experiences to their lives and apply what they have learned.

So, for every experience girls have, encourage time for talking, sharing, reflecting, and applying their insights to new experiences in their lives. As girls lead each other in activities, they will have a chance to practice this approach themselves. Articulating their thoughts and feelings will consolidate what they are discovering about themselves and leadership.

### Cooperative Learning

Through cooperative learning, girls work together toward shared goals in an atmosphere of respect and collaboration that encourages the sharing of skills, knowledge and learning.

Working together in all-girl environments also encourages girls to feel powerful and emotionally and physically safe, and it allows them to experience a sense of belonging

even in the most diverse groups. While building their relationship skills, the girls will especially value having a team atmosphere that makes them feel safe and supported.

## Understanding Teen Girls

Each girl is an individual and will develop at their own pace. The chart below can give you guidance in the development of girls ages 14 – 17. Keep in mind that the activities that girls plan should be age-appropriate and based on their needs, interests and abilities.

<b>Developmental Issues</b>	<b>Girls Grades 9 – 10</b>	<b>Girls Grades 11 –12</b>
<b>Physical Changes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Growth in height</li> <li>· Voice lowering</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Features are developing adult characteristics</li> </ul>
<b>Social Changes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Greater body and hormonal changes</li> <li>· Gaining peer support</li> <li>· Explore independent values</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Self-expression</li> <li>· Greater Autonomy/less parental support</li> </ul>
<b>Defining Moments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Rite of passage – becoming a teenager</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· New independence – now can drive</li> </ul>
<b>Worries</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Grades</li> <li>· Will boys like me?</li> <li>· Appearance/eating disorders</li> <li>· Too much to do!</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Grades, Success</li> <li>· Too much to do!</li> </ul>
<b>Pressures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Pressure to act a certain way</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Worried about getting into the right college</li> </ul>
<b>Activity Interest</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Personalize their own space</li> <li>· Taking trips</li> <li>· Music to express self</li> <li>· Developing image through clothes and fashion</li> <li>· Dating</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Career opportunities</li> <li>· Self-defense</li> <li>· Managing time</li> <li>· Dealing with emotions</li> <li>· Leadership Events</li> </ul>
<b>You can Help By...</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Model how to explore and affirm emotions and reactions to new experiences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Empower them</li> <li>· Encourage their Individual interests</li> </ul>

## Working with and mentoring younger girls

Girl Scout Seniors and Ambassadors frequently are asked to help with younger girls at troop meetings, service unit events or even larger events. This can be a great leadership development activity for them.

Before these activities take place, be sure that everyone involved understands their expectations of each other. If they are working at a Service Unit event, the volunteer in charge of that event, you and your girls all need to be in agreement about what your girls are expected to do. As a respect for the older girls, they should be asked ahead of time “Will you lead songs or games as a gathering activity before our event?” There is a difference between helping younger girls during a craft session planned by event volunteer and planning and leading a craft session themselves. Event volunteers are often not clear about what is expected, and you may have to be the advocate for your older girl troop about getting clear info.

Also, our older girls are not members simply to help younger girls. While there are great benefits to working with younger girls, our Seniors and Ambassadors deserve their own activities. As a leader of an older girl troop, you might find yourself having to say something like “My girls love to lead games and I am sure they will be glad to lead a games session during our service unit event, but we also need to make sure we build in some activities for them to do so they aren’t just helping out.”

## For more information on activities to do with Senior and Ambassador Girl Scouts, check out:

<http://www.girlscouts.org/content/gsusa/en/our-program/badges.html>

<http://www.girlscouts.org/content/gsusa/en/our-program/journeys.html>

<http://www.girlscouts.org/content/gsusa/en/our-program/highest-awards.html>

<http://www.girlscouts.org/content/gsusa/en/our-program/cookie-program.html>

<http://www.girlscouts.org/content/gsusa/en/our-program/grade-levels/what-seniors-do.html>

<http://www.girlscouts.org/content/gsusa/en/our-program/grade-levels/what-ambassadors-do.html>

<http://www.girlsinc.org/resources/tips-parents/tips-parents.html>

<http://www.ted.com/talks>

<http://www.aosn.org/resources/STEM%20Challenge.html>

<http://www.aosn.org/resources/stem-and-the-future.html>

<http://www.girlscouts.org/en/about-girl-scouts/girl-scouts-and-stem.html>

<http://pbskids.org/>

<http://tryengineering.org/>

<http://www.kidactivities.net/post/Community-Service-Ideas-for-Kids.aspx>

<http://www.unitedway.org/blog/community-service-for-kids>

<http://www.pbs.org/parents/special/article-tips-for-volunteering-with-kids.html>

<http://www.hercampus.com/high-school/10-cool-ways-do-your-community-service-hours>

[www.globalcitizencorps.org](http://www.globalcitizencorps.org)

<http://gysd.org/share>

[www.serve.gov](http://www.serve.gov)

[www.spirit.prudential.com](http://www.spirit.prudential.com)

[www.tigweb.org](http://www.tigweb.org)

[www.un.org/millenniumgoals](http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals)

[www.waggs.org](http://www.waggs.org)

[www.genv.net](http://www.genv.net)

<http://www.volunteermatch.org/>

<http://www.idealists.org/>

<http://www.generationon.org/kids>

<http://compassionatekids.weebly.com/>

<http://www.redcross.org/volunteer/volunteer-opportunities>

<http://rootsandshoots.org/>

<https://www.teenlife.com/blogs/50-community-service-ideas-teen-volunteers>

<https://www.dosomething.org/us>

<http://www.volunteernation.org/about>

<https://www.yvc.org/>

<https://lauragraceweldon.com/2013/06/27/40-ways-kids-can-volunteer-toddler-to-teen/>

## Behavior Management

Adolescence is a time of rapid physical, cognitive, social and emotional change. Girls will exhibit behaviors that can be challenging and bewildering to not only you, their families and their friends, but even to the girls themselves. These changes do not necessarily constitute behavior problems, but are very often a normal part of development. Being aware of these changes can make your troop run more smoothly and prevent unnecessary power struggles.

Adolescents are often very authoritarian. As they are able to consider ideals like justice and broad social issues, they begin to understand that there is such a thing as a social contract, and that rules and laws are necessary for the greater social good. However, they are just learning to see the gray areas between right and wrong.

When adolescents begin to show signs of physical growth, adults tend to expect both mature social and emotional behavior, and the rebelliousness and emotional unpredictability that our society has come to associate with adolescence.

Although news media reports, public opinion, and popular songs, movies and books give the impression that adolescence is a period of stress and rebellion, research shows that the social and emotional problems associated with adolescence have been overemphasized and are misleading.

In deciding whether a young person needs professional help, it is critical for adults to distinguish between behavior that is annoying (loud music, messy rooms) and behavior that is disturbed and harmful (substance abuse, depression).

It is through the peer group that young people begin to learn how to develop and maintain close, supportive relationships with others their own age. Friendships are laboratories for learning appropriate adolescent and adult behavior.

Adults who work with young people can have an influence on peer groups through the expectations they set, the relationships they build and the options they provide for adolescent peer groups to function in a constructive, healthy way.

### **Tips for Effective Behavior Management**

The key to behavior management is prevention. If we understand the changes that girls face as they go through adolescence, and if you try to be preventive in your reactions to their behaviors, you will be successful in leading Girl Scout Seniors and Ambassadors.

It is not normal for a child to behave all of the time.

There is positive discipline and negative discipline. Positive discipline is a productive form of correction that supports the Girl Scout Leadership Experience, while negative discipline undermines a girl's sense of security and well-being. The goal of discipline in a Girl Scout group is to help the advisor and the girls to manage behavior in a way that facilitates the accomplishment of the goals of the group and the goals of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience. Approaching behavioral problems with an understanding of positive discipline and negative discipline will help you make better decisions and will help you to work with the girls rather than against them.

<b>In positive discipline...</b>	<b>In negative discipline...</b>
The outlook is <i>for</i> the girl: to help her to learn to control herself.	The outlook is <i>to</i> the girl: an eye for an eye.
The purpose is the correction, maturity, and growth of the girl.	The purpose is inflicting a penalty for offenses committed.

The focus is to the future and correction of behavior.	The focus is on past misdeeds.
The attitude is love and concern.	The attitude is hostility and frustration.
The resulting emotion for the girl is a sense of security.	The resulting emotions for the girl are fear and guilt.

There are many reasons why a girl misbehaves. Remember that she brings a lot with her to troop/group meetings and Girl Scout activities (family situations, worries about school, feelings and emotions, etc.).

Also, having the girls set their own set of “rules of behavior” for their meetings and posting a list of the rules gives a great way to guide behavior in a way that does not lead to rebellion against authority. An example of this might concern cell phone use. Girls might agree that phones go on a table near the door or stay in bags during the meeting. If girls are bringing them out during the meeting, you could point out they the group chose the rule and ask why they chose to include it in their rules.

For more information and ideas on conflict resolution, check out <http://www.rachelsimmons.com/advice/girltips/>

### Communication

When working with Girl Scout Seniors and Ambassadors, communication is key. And that breaks down into how you communicate, how often you communicate and what you communicate.

Girls are very busy and they have their preferred methods of communications. Email often seems “old school” to them. Survey your girls and their parents to see what is the best contact method (or combination of methods) to use. If you have girls who prefer to text and parents who prefer email, there are even apps which allow you to send both of these types of messages with one tap of a button.

Don’t get frustrated if you have to share information with your girls multiple times. Advertisers know that you have to communicate your message to a target audience at least three times (if not more), so you will probably need multiple exposures to your message also. Try switching it up...have one of the girls take on the role of reminder about an upcoming project. A different “voice” can often make the message stick out!

If you just start their first meeting of the year with a general “what do you want to do?” question, many of the girls and their parents/guardians might feel lost, confused, and like you aren’t prepared. But that isn’t the case – you are giving them the opportunity to really be “girl-led.” Until they really understand and “get” that they are doing the planning, you should remind them that it is their troop and their choice. Asking them *how* they wish to discuss the topic/make the choice is a great starting point also, and gets the conversational ball rolling.

## Evaluation Questions to ask Girl Scout Seniors and Ambassadors

Evaluation helps girls gain positive meaning from their experiences. Below are some questions to ask Girl Scout Senior and Ambassadors when evaluating a troop event or activity. You may notice the questions have a flow to them, but remember: asking the questions is more important than the order in which you ask them.

### **What the girls saw or noticed:**

What did you see?

What stories did you hear?

What images do you remember?

What were the main points?

### **What the girls felt or how they reacted:**

What was the best part?

Was there anything you had done before?

Was there anything you did that you had never done before?

What was familiar?

What did it remind you of?

### **What meaning the event had for the girls or the impact of the activity:**

What did you learn?

What was important to you?

What was the value to you?

### **What the next steps are or what to do differently in the future:**

What can we change because of this activity?

What will we keep doing because of this activity?

Where do we go from here?

Do you agree with these steps?

For creative evaluation techniques: [http://www.ehow.com/info\\_8481757\\_creative-evaluation-methods.html](http://www.ehow.com/info_8481757_creative-evaluation-methods.html)

## Parental Engagement

One of your greatest resources as a troop leader will be the girls' parents. Beyond keeping them informed about what is happening with the troop, you will want/need their assistance—like providing snacks for meetings, helping with cookie booth sales or having enough adults on trips to meet the girl-adult ratios. Parent involvement will not only enrich

the girls' experience, it will help you fulfill your role as a leader by allowing you to focus on your work with the girls. The suggestions below will give you a good start on how to involve parents in your troop.

## **Plan a Parent Meeting**

Having a parent meeting is important to the success of your Girl Scout Senior or Ambassador troop. Parent meetings allow you to begin building a relationship with your greatest resource. You should ensure everyone has a time to meet each other and to learn about Girl Scouts as an organization, about you and your role, and about what role they will be expected to play. Below is a sample agenda to help you plan a parent meeting.

### **Welcome and Introductions**

Personally welcome all parents and guardians.

Be sure everyone has a nametag.

Have an activity where the parents and guardians introduce themselves and learn something about each other.

Introduce your co-leader(s) and any other adults working with the troop.

### **Provide Information**

Explain the Girl Scout Mission, Promise and Law

In your own words, share the benefits of being a Girl Scout

Discuss the importance of girl/adult partnerships, teaching group decision making and how you will implement that with the Girl Scout Seniors or Ambassadors.

### **Explain the role of the Troop Leader and Assistant Leader(s)**

Describe the trainings you have taken that have prepared you to be a Girl Scout Leader

Briefly explain your responsibility as a troop leader.

Tell them about the support you will receive from the service unit and the council.

### **Share Your Expectation for the Parents' Roles and Responsibilities**

Give specific examples of how parents can help support the troop.

Let the parents know how they can help you be a successful leader.

Be upfront and clear with parents about dues and provide them with a breakdown of costs, based on the plans you have.

Explain the benefits of being involved with their daughter's Girl Scout troop.

Invite family members to register with the troop. Please note: any parents attending a Girl Scout activity are highly recommended to register as Girl Scout members so that they are covered by Girl Scout insurance.

For more information on parental engagement, check out:

[https://www.casrc-chkrctrainings.org/newlook/trainings/SpecialNeedsPt2/Slide9\\_QuestionstoAskFamilies.pdf](https://www.casrc-chkrctrainings.org/newlook/trainings/SpecialNeedsPt2/Slide9_QuestionstoAskFamilies.pdf)  
<https://bostnet.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Engaging-Families-Checklist.pdf>  
<https://bostnet.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/50-Nifty-Tips1.pdf>  
<http://www.tolerance.org/supplement/family-engagement>  
<http://gscm.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Parental-Involvement-handout.pdf>  
<https://www.gswcf.org/content/dam/wcf-images/pdf-forms/New-Leader-Guide-Gaining-Parent-Support.pdf>  
<https://www.ptotoday.com/parent-involvement>

## Communicating with Parents

**Establish a method of communication.** Will the girls receive fliers to take home that talk about Girl Scout activities? Will the parents receive phone call or emails? Does the troop have a newsletter? Be sure to establish a method of communication with parents. Even though the girls are in high school, they still cannot be counted on to share important information with their parents. As a leader, you need to be communicating on a regular basis with the girl's parents/guardians. You can use various methods of communication to do this: phone calls, troop newsletters, email, texts, facebook group page, etc.

When it comes to meeting times and locations, make sure that you are notifying the parents as well as the girls. Girls can also help draft a message or email with the details that parents will need to know about an upcoming trip or project.

**Greet the parents.** As parents drop off or pick up their daughters from the meeting, be sure a leader or co-leader is assigned to greet them and communicate with them about the meeting and any upcoming activities. This also allows the parents to speak with you or your co-leader about their daughter. Also, be sure to relay any important information as parents pick up their daughters.

**Keep in touch with parents.** It may not be realistic to contact all of your parents on a weekly basis however, make a point to connect with the parents. Tell them how their daughter is progressing. If you are proud of a girl's accomplishment, tell her parents. Communicate successes and concerns. A simple conversation can go a long way.

**Have parents sign up to help.** A great time to solicit assistance is at your parent meeting. Parents and extended family of the girls are your best resource. Ask if you need an extra set of hands at meetings, drivers for field trips or help with a project. Be sure you ask them directly. If you are vague or nondescript about what needs to happen, they will not volunteer.

Remember every driver must be an approved adult volunteer and have a good driving record, a valid license, and a registered/insured vehicle.

**Recognize parents.**

Send a note to thank parents for their help, mention their assistance in your troop's newsletter, and share with them how you have seen their daughter change and grow.

[Sample Parent Welcome Letter](#)

## Getting Started

### Troop Government

Troop government or structure is usually most effective when chosen by the girls. This may be formal or very informal. Let the girls decide how structured they want this to be. If they start with NO kind of group government, they may eventually see the need for some kind of structure before long! This is part of their learning experience.

There are several types of troop government, and some may be more appropriate depending on the size of your troop.

[Types of Troop Government](#)

## Girl Responsibilities

### Girl/Adult Planning and Partnership

In Girl Scouting, girls and adults work together to accomplish troop goals. Girl/adult planning or partnership and is unique, because the girls take the lead in deciding what activities they will do, making the plans for the activities and evaluating the activities.

At the Senior and Ambassador level, the troop advisor basically only steps in to ensure that safety and other such important considerations are factored into the planning process. The Girl Scout Seniors and Ambassadors themselves should be doing all of the planning.

### Role of Girls in Partnership

- Patrol system, representative government, council planning boards
- Leadership Projects – Program Aides (PA), Counselor in Training (CIT I and II), Volunteer in Training (VIT)
- Girls' involvement in girl/adult planning teams
- Girls serving as girl members of the council board of directors or as delegates to national events
- Girls planning entire events, if experienced
- Girls working individually, as well as in committees
- Group review and self-evaluation
- Apprenticeship
- Networking

- Experiences providing specific tools for full girl/adult partnership (leading meetings, attending board training workshops, annual meetings)

### **Role of Adults in Partnership**

Your role during the course of the planning process is to guide the girls. Help the girls prioritize; you do not prioritize activities. Help the girls review and adjust the plans; you do not change the plans.

Your time spent planning should be minimal. You can think about opportunities of which your girls might not be aware, analyze what their needs and interests are, and what kinds of experiences might suit those needs. Think of your role in the girl/adult planning as being one of questioning rather than telling. Ask questions to push the girls to come up with solutions and ideas, rather than offering them yourself.

The girls will possibly make mistakes, but be aware that mistakes are a part of the learning process. As long as the safety of the girls is not compromised, there is nothing wrong with letting the girls create problems for themselves. Girl Scouting is one of the only opportunities girls have to make mistakes without any serious or lasting consequences. If girls take risks in school, their grades may suffer. If they fail in their social lives, they risk ridicule. If they make mistakes in judgment at home, they may be grounded.

Your role is to mentor girls and to be a facilitator and partner. The girls will possibly make mistakes, but be aware that mistakes are a part of the learning process. As long as the safety of the girls is not compromised, there is nothing wrong with letting the girls create problems for themselves. Girl Scouting is one of the only opportunities girls can make mistakes without any serious or lasting consequences.

### **How do you know Girl/Adult partnership is working?**

- Girls are enthusiastic about their meetings, attendance is high, and girls are eager to be involved in different activities.
- As the Girl Scout year progresses, the advisor is spending less time planning and setting up activities and more time facilitating the flow of activities and problem solving.
- Girls are familiar with the range of Girl Scout program resources available for their grade level and choose activities from more than one source.
- Girls work on activities in a variety of ways. They work individually, in pairs, in small groups as a whole group, or with other troops/groups, depending upon the activity and their own needs and interests.
- As the Girl Scout year progresses, girls are able to make decisions more smoothly and effectively. As they continue to practice active decision-making, they complete a larger number of activities or choose more sophisticated and complex ones to do.
- Girls show more respect for each other. Individual strengths and talents are more visible when girls are active, and girls learn to value these in one another.

- Girls show pride in being members of Girl Scouting. They tell girls outside of Girl Scouting about their experiences, and are eager to share their accomplishments with friends and family members.

[Volunteer Essentials](#)  
[Safety Activity Checkpoints](#)

## Components of a Meeting

### Creating a Quality Experience

Girl Scouting's promise to girls is stated in the mission: Girl Scouting builds girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place. Girls engage in activities that help them Discover themselves and their values, Connect with others, and Take Action to make the world a better place.

A quality Girl Scout Leadership Experience includes going on a Leadership Journey, earning badges, taking field trips, selling Cookies and Fall Products, and enjoying Girl Scout traditions. Together with the girls and families in your troop, you will take part in activities and challenges where girls play an active part in planning and doing, learn by doing, and work together toward shared goals.

### Girl Scout Meeting Tips

#### *First-time Girl Scouts*

If girls are meeting each other for the first time, advisors may need to plan and structure the first and possibly the second gathering. Most often, the first gathering will be focused on activities that are FUN to the girls and include team-building and getting to know one another activities. The next meeting will often involve idea sharing and planning and kick-off how the girls themselves see their meetings and what will work for the girls, advisors and parents.

#### *Girl Scouts who have already been in a troop*

If the girls have been a troop/group for a long time, the first meeting for them will be the discussing how the girls see themselves in their new role as a Girl Scout Senior or Ambassador and what type of meetings/gatherings will work for the girls, advisor, and parents.

Whether first-time or long-time Girl Scouts, the girls are encouraged to “think outside of the box” regarding their meetings. Deciding on the formats themselves is an essential activity for a girl that encourages cooperative learning and learning by doing.

Advisors – guide the planning by asking the girls:

- How often can we truly get together?

- What format and places will work best – bi-weekly evenings? Meeting at a coffee shop? Saturday mornings? Monthly sleepovers?
- What do the girls want to accomplish when gathering?
- How can the Girl Scout program support the girls in their lives and other activities?

### **Tips for Running Meetings (Create Hyperlink)**

- Go with the flow
- Communicate
- Be aware
- Be proactive

### **Sample Meeting Structure**

The following is a structure that the girls may use to create their gatherings:

- Starting Point – While girls may not want an official “ceremony” to open the meeting, be sure to have some way of indicating that the meeting has started. For this age level, this might be as simple as saying “it’s time to begin the meeting girls, let’s put your cell phones away and have a seat here.” Girls may still want to start the meeting with reciting the GS Promise and Law.
- Business/Discussion – Take care of the troop business now. One of the girls should be responsible for taking attendance. Collect any forms such as permission slips or other items that the girls may be bringing back. Discuss or brainstorm future plans and projects such as field trips or service projects.
- Activity – This is the main part of the meeting for the girls. Activities will vary: speakers, presentations, service projects, etc. Make sure that the girls are taking a primary role in the selection, planning, and facilitation and that all activities align with the Leadership experience.
- Cleanup – Everyone should pitch in or use a kaper chart if your group is large enough.
- Ending – A time to wind down and wrap up the meeting. You need to have some way to wrap up and review, and to indicate the meeting is over and it is time to leave.

[Supplemental Meeting Activities](#)  
[Meeting Components and Sample Meeting](#)

**Please visit the Volunteer Tool Kit to Plan your Girl Scout year!**

### **Kaper Charts**

A kaper chart is a girl-planning tool that can help the leader teach responsibility and leadership skills. Troops often use a kaper chart to divide the different duties and tasks of a troop meeting amongst the girls. The girls, with guidance from the leader, can decide what specific jobs need to be done each meeting.

[Kaper Charts](#)

[Pinterest Kaper Chart Ideas](#)

## The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting

Girls at every grade level have a *Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting*, which correlate with the Leadership Journeys. Through fun activities, girls can earn a variety of badges to build the skills and gain the confidence they will use to change the world. They can even develop and complete activities to make their own badge – a great way to explore a topic of personal interest. (In addition, girls who make their own badge will learn *how* to learn, an important skill to have in school, on the job, and in life!)

*The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting* is designed to complement the Leadership Journeys at each grade level. This means that each Skill-Building Badge Set is tied to one of the three Journeys. There are currently three sets for Seniors and each is sold separately from *The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting*. (Ambassadors do not have Skill-building Badge Sets as surveys indicate that girls at this age level are less driven by badges and are more likely to utilize the time they can dedicate to Girl Scouting for working on their Gold Award or other activities.) You will find that doing a Journey and the related badge set at the same time will make it easy to offer the entire National Program Portfolio—Journeys and badges—in a seamless way.

Inside *The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting* binder, you will discover three tabs: Handbook, Badges, and My Girl Scouts.

The Handbook section consists of the Girl Scout Promise and Law, Journey Map, Girl Scout history and traditions, Girls of the World, Girl Scout Special Days, insignia and awards, bridging requirements, and Silver and Gold Award Guidelines.

Under the Badges section you will discover the Awards Log, which lists all of the awards that can be earned by a Girl Scout along with the requirement booklets for the Legacy Badges.

My Girl Scouts section contains a journal, community service log and a place where the girls can write a letter to themselves to be read in the future.

The Girls Guide to Girl Scouting can be bought from the Girl Scout office or online at <http://www.girlscoutsdiamonds.org/en/our-council/shop.html>

## Ceremonies

Ceremonies play a very important role in Girl Scouting. They not only mark the progression of the Girl Scout year, but of the girls' individual journeys through Girl Scouting. There are many opportunities to conduct ceremonies. A ceremony may welcome new girls into Girl Scouting (an investiture), observe a special Girl Scout day (a World Thinking Day

ceremony), recognize accomplishments (a Court of Awards), or may open or close a meeting (flag ceremony).

[Types of Ceremonies](#)  
[Ceremonies Tip Sheet](#)

## Travel

To ensure that any travel you do with the girls infuses the Girl Scout Leadership Experience at every opportunity, limit your role to facilitating the girls' brainstorming and planning – but never doing the work for them. Allow the girls to lead, learn collaboratively, and learn by doing (and by making mistakes). All the while, however, provide ideas and insight, ask tough questions when you must, and support all their decisions with enthusiasm and encouragement!

### Suggested Travel Destinations:

- Festivals
- Restaurant Dinners
- Sporting events
- Ice Skating/Roller Skating
- Musicals and plays
- Pottery Studio
- Challenge Courses
- Radio/TV Stations
- Spa days
- Camping
- Council-sponsored events
- Caving
- Lighthouse explorations
- State and National Parks
- Bike riding
- World Centers
- Horseback Riding
- Water activities
- Theme Parks
- Canoeing
- Geocaching
- Skiing
- Archery
- Leadership Conferences
- Girl Scout National Conventions
- GSUSA Destinations

## Troop Travel Guidelines

Before most trips, troops will need to obtain council permission. Visit the Girl Scouts Diamonds website for more information about troop travel and to complete a troop travel application. Please complete this application at least two weeks prior to your trip.

[Travel Information](#)

[Troop Travel Application](#)

More information about troop travel and troop finances can be found in [Volunteer Essentials](#)

## Girl Scout Destinations

Destinations are travel experiences that range from two days to three weeks and can whisk girls around the country and to the far corners of the world where they will meet other remarkable girls, develop leadership skills, gain confidence, and enjoy valuable learning opportunities to take action. Destinations are open to girls ages 11-17. Information about offerings, applications and deadlines is available at <http://forgirls.girlscouts.org/travel/>

## Troop Finances

Girls at these levels should have an active role in creating and tracking a troop budget or a budget for Girl Scout Gold Award projects. Troop funds can be used for activities, travel, service projects or program and event fees. These funds can come from a start-up fee, monthly dues, or from the Fall Product Program or Cookie Program. Troops are able to participate in other specific fund raising activities. More information about fundraising can be found in [Volunteer Essentials](#)

## Special Girl Scout Days and Activities

Throughout the year, there are some special days that Girl Scouts observe. The chart below lists these days. Troops and Service Units often observe these days with special activities or ceremonies.

Juliette Low's Birthday (Founder's Day)	October 31
MLK Day of Service	January
World Thinking Day	February 22
Girl Scout Birthday	March 12
Girl Scout Week	Week with March 12
Girl Scout Sunday	Sunday at beginning of Girl Scout Week
Girl Scout Sabbath	Saturday at end of Girl Scout Week

[Online Calendar](#)

## Highest Awards

Girl Scout Seniors and Ambassadors can earn their Gold Award. For more information visit <http://www.girlscoutsdiamonds.org/en/about-girl-scouts/our-program/highest-awards.html>

Girl Scouts – Diamonds of Arkansas, Oklahoma and Texas requires girls attend a Gold Award training before submitting a project proposal for approval from the Gold Award Committee. These trainings are held throughout the council at various times throughout the year.

## Teen Mentoring Awards

Girl Scout Seniors and Ambassadors can earn their Counselor-in-Training (CIT I) Award through our summer resident camp program or Volunteer-in-Training (VIT) by working with younger girls in a troop setting. Girl Scout Ambassadors who have completed CIT I may continue with CIT II.

For more information visit <http://www.girlscoutsdiamonds.org/en/about-girl-scouts/our-program/highest-awards/other-awards.html>

## Glossary of common GS terms

**CAT/Delegate** Seniors and Ambassadors may have the opportunity to serve as a service unit representative on the Council Advisory Team (CAT). They might also have the opportunity to serve on the council delegation to the Girl Scout National Conference (held every three years).

**Destinations** Girl Scout Destinations are the ultimate adventure for individual girls ages 11 and older! With different trips every year, there's something amazing for everyone to experience. Make friends from all over the country as you travel with Girl Scouts from different states, see and learn new things, and pack your bags full of inspiring, life-changing experiences and memories.

**Diamonds Graduating Senior Scholarship Program** This is a council program committed to advancing leadership opportunities for its girl members after high school. The education scholarships are available for graduating senior Girl Scouts who epitomize the Girl Scout Mission. The number of scholarships available is based on current funding for the scholarship program. Scholarship recipients will be honored at the Diamonds graduating seniors and Gold and Silver Award luncheon. Information can be found here <http://www.girlscoutsdiamonds.org/?s=scholarships>

**Gamma Sigma** Gamma Sigma Gamma is a division of Girl Scouts Diamonds that is offered to a girl 9th-12th grade. GSG brings girls together through the bond of sisterhood to learn about leadership, service opportunities, and how to take next steps after high school. If you are interested in joining or starting a new chapter of Gamma Sigma Gamma in your area please email us at [gammasigmagamma@girlscoutsdiamonds.org](mailto:gammasigmagamma@girlscoutsdiamonds.org)

**Girl Guides** The original name for Girl Scouts, a term still used in many countries. The name originated in England.

**Girl Scouts Always Leave a Place Better than They Found It** Unwritten Girl Scout rule.

**Girl Scout handshake** A formal greeting between Girl Scouts. The handshake is done by shaking left hands while giving the Girl Scout sign with the right.

**Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE)** The Girl Scout program model that engages girls by developing the skills, knowledge, and values needed to be leaders.

**Girl Scout mission statement** Girl Scouting builds girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place.

**Girl Scout sign** The official Girl Scout sign to be used as the Girl Scout Promise is being recited and may be used as the Girl Scout Law is recited (optional). It is also used during the Girl Scout handshake. The right hand is raised shoulder high with the three middle fingers extended and the thumb crossing over the palm to hold down the little finger.

**Girl Scout slogan** "Do a good turn daily."

**Motto** "Be Prepared."

**My Promise My Faith** Girls in grades K-12 can earn this pin each year by exploring the Girl Scout Law and teachings from their faith. Requirements are found in the handbook section of the *Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting!*

**National Program Portfolio** This is the combined activity materials for the Girl Scout Leadership Experience including Journeys and the *Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting!*

**Safety activity checkpoints** GSUSA's safety program standards found at [www.girlscoutsdiamonds.org](http://www.girlscoutsdiamonds.org)